



THE HISTORIC  
NEW ORLEANS  
COLLECTION  
QUARTERLY

Volume X, Number 1

Winter 1992

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★ ★ ★ OVER HERE! ★ ★ ★

NEW ORLEANS DURING  
WORLD WAR II



*New Orleans-made Higgins LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle-Personnel) during World War II. Courtesy the Higgins family  
Story inside by Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose*

**T**he first time I met General Eisenhower was in the spring of 1964, at his home in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He had asked me to become an editor of his papers. When we completed a discussion of what would be involved, he said he had noticed I was teaching at LSU in New Orleans. "Did you know Andy Higgins?" he asked.

"No, sir," I replied. "He died before I came to town."

"That's too bad," Eisenhower said. "He is the man who won the war for us."

My face showed the astonishment I felt at such a statement from such a source, so Eisenhower explained: "Without the Higgins boats, we could never have landed on an open beach. Had Higgins not designed and then built in such quantities the LCVP (Landing Craft Vehicle-Personnel), the whole strategy of the war would have been different, and probably not successful."

Other firms made different types of landing craft (as did Higgins), other industrial plants in New Orleans produced ships (the most important was Delta on the Industrial Canal, which made liberty ships), but the story of New Orleans in World War II will forever be linked with Higgins Industries. Upwards of 30,000 New Orleanians worked at the Higgins boat yards; they produced more than 20,000 landing craft. "Let's thank God for Higgins

Industries," Eisenhower declared in a Thanksgiving address in 1944.

Andrew Jackson Higgins is all but unknown in New Orleans today. There are no markers or memorials to him in the city that forgot to care. But he was never forgotten by the man who was in the best position to know how critical was his — and New Orleans's — contribution to the victory. It is, therefore, altogether fitting and appropriate that the Historic New Orleans Collection is featuring Higgins Industries in its exhibit on New Orleans in the war years.

**T**he war years were wonderful years for New Orleans. The city had been as hard hit by the Great Depression as any in the nation, with an unemployment rate that sometimes went over 30%, but during the war the city boomed. Higgins, Delta, and other plants provided full employment and then some. Many of the workers were women, many were black, holding full-time, well-paid jobs for the first time in their lives. Personal savings doubled, then doubled again. A steady job and money in the bank was something most New Orleanians under 35 years of age had never before experienced.

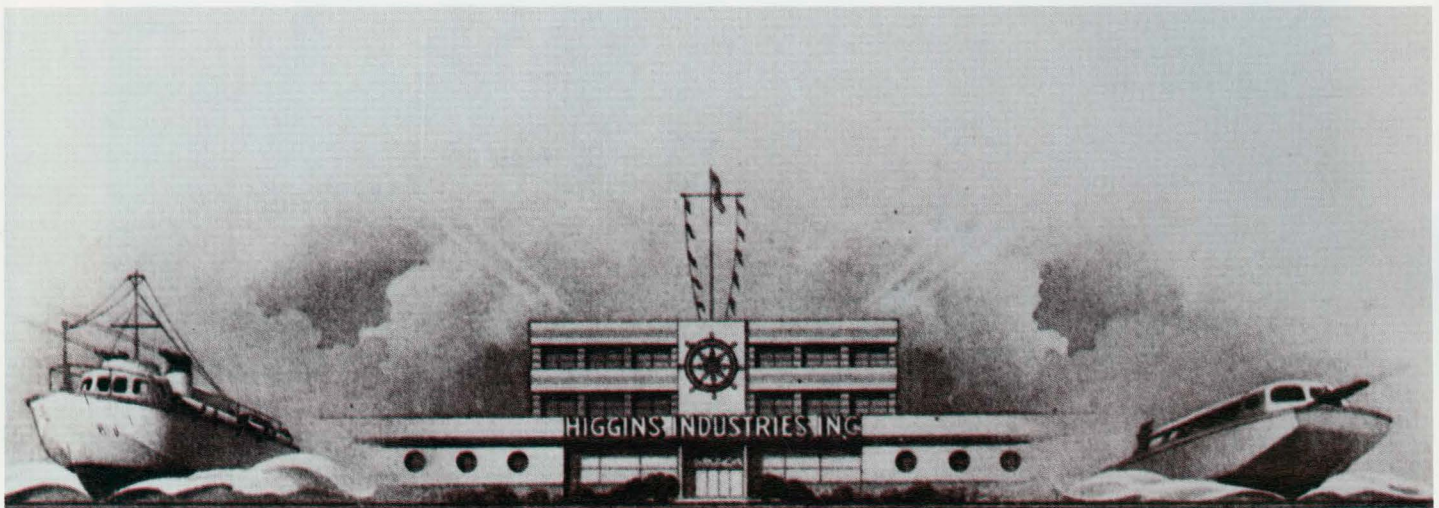
Visitors came to the city in record numbers. They were servicemen, not tourists, either in transit to the combat zone or stationed at Camp Leroy Johnson, the Algiers Naval Base, Jackson



*Andrew Jackson Higgins, Sr. Courtesy the Higgins family*

Barracks, Camp Plauche, or the Naval Reserve Aviation Base (on the site of present-day UNO), one of the largest flight-training centers in the nation.

A city famous for its hospitality did all it could for these young men, ranging from houses of prostitution (there were over 100 known whorehouses) and bars to city- or USO-sponsored dances or reading rooms, to a popular program that arranged for lonely servicemen to have Sunday dinners in the homes of New Orleanians. Brian Altobello, in his new and highly recommended book *New Orleans Goes to War: An Oral History of New Orleanians During World War II*, points out that tax revenues from the sale of beer more than doubled between





Billboard, Baronne and Common streets, urged New Orleanians to buy war bonds, 1943. Charles L. Franck Photographers (1979.325.4086)

1942 and 1944 — without an increase in the rate! The love affair that the American people have with New Orleans got its start during the war; the city today hosts more veterans associations reunions than any other.

Although Mardi Gras was canceled for the duration of the war, there were plenty of parades — as always, any excuse would do. There were Army Day parades, Navy Relief parades, Higgins Industries parades, Mother's Day parades, and so forth.

Of course there were difficulties (“Don’t you know there’s a war on?”). Gas rationing, meat rationing, no tires to be had at any price, no new cars or washing machines or other consumer durables for sale. Two technological breakthroughs that had been ready to take off in 1940 and were to change life permanently in New Orleans had to be postponed until after the war — air

conditioning and television. People went to the movies (in record numbers) or to dances for their entertainment; they found such relief from the summertime heat as they could by fanning themselves on their front porches.

Some things never change in New Orleans. The lead story in the *Times-Picayune* on December 6, 1941, was an attack on the newly reelected mayor, Robert Maestri. It blasted Hizzoner for allegedly mishandling public

funds, for expensive private parties at the taxpayers’ expense, and other indiscretions. But the following day the scandal was eclipsed by the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Patriotic as always, New Orleans sent tens of thousands of her young men off to war. On Monday morning, December 8, 1941, there was an enormous rush to enlist. Altobello reports that the first in line was Lyman Crovetto of 1705 Gallier Street. Crovetto worried that his occupation, dice dealer at the Jefferson Inn, would force the Marines to turn him down, but he was accepted.

After Pearl Harbor, the panic that swept the nation hit New Orleans hard. On January 22, 1942, Governor Sam Jones warned: “We are not safe in our homes. Do you know that an airplane can fly in a line from the Pacific to New Orleans in five hours? We are not safe.” General Campbell Hodges, president of LSU, predicted that New Orleans would “sooner or later get its share of bombings.”

What it got instead was more than its share of ship sinkings by German submarines off the mouth of the Mississippi River. They began in May of 1942 and continued for more than a year. Initially the pickings were easy for the U-boat commanders, as lights from automobiles and coastal villages and cities silhouetted oil tankers. Eventually General Walter Kreuger, commander of the Southern Defense Command, ordered a blackout for all coastal towns along the Gulf, effective 10 miles inland for all small towns and 25 miles inland for cities of 5,000 or more.

Except for those who got jobs at Higgins Industries or who went into the armed services, blacks saw little improvement in their lives. New Orleans denounced Hitler for his racism while maintaining a rigid system of segregation at home. Blacks sat in the back of the bus (or streetcar), they got their water from separate drinking fountains, used

**"We took the Beaches with Higgins Boats"**

"Without the boats that Higgins is manufacturing the Combined Operations Command could not exist."  
—LORD MOUNTBATTEN

AFRICA! SOLOMONS! CHANNEL! NEW GUINEA! ATTU! SICILY! SALERNO!

These Higgins boats are so tough they land directly on rocky beaches, without troops, tanks and equipment dry shod, retreating themselves by their own power. They're plenty fast in assault, can turn on a dime to zig-zag away from trouble, and I never saw one capsize!"

HIGGINS BOATS—designed and built for the United Nations were described thus by veterans of Guadalcanal and Attu, who also said, in official records, that these boats were the "Best in the World." This praise comes from men who manned them under fire—from men whose lives often depended upon these boats' unusual maneuverability, stamina and trouble-free operation.

Today Higgins plants are engaged the clock around in manufacturing boats, planes and other products to meet the rapidly changing needs of nations at war. It is this ability to change—to pioneer—to anticipate tomorrow's needs—that makes "Higgins" a name to watch.

BOATS • ENGINES • AIRPLANES • WOOD ALLOYS

NEW ORLEANS HUB OF THE AMERICAS

BUY MORE WAR BONDS To Help Pay For The Ever-decreasing Cost That Mass Production Makes Possible

Higgins boats were acclaimed and advertised in national periodicals (1991.107.2).

segregated toilet facilities, were not allowed to eat in white restaurants, sat in the balcony in their own section in movie theaters, and otherwise were degraded in public in every way possible.

That racism stood in sharp contrast to the central theme of New Orleans at war. The theme was teamwork. "We are all in this together" was a phrase heard almost as frequently as "Don't you know there's a war on?" In the Depression, New Orleanians had felt isolated, alone, fearful. In the war, they felt a sense of belonging. There was a commitment to the notion that society's needs come before individual desires. The war created a "we" generation, as opposed to today's "me" generation. We were faced with a great challenge, we met it, we overcame all obstacles, and we won.

On the day the war ended, Marjorie Haselton wrote her husband, stationed in China with the Navy, a letter that summed it up perfectly: "You and I were brought up to think cynically of patriotism by the bitter, realistic writers of the twenties and thirties. This war has taught me — I love my country and I'm not ashamed to admit it anymore. I am

proud of the men of my generation. Brought up in false prosperity and then degrading depression, they have overcome these handicaps. None of you fellows wanted the deal life handed you — but just about everyone of you gritted your teeth and hung on. You boys proved that you had a fighting spirit and team work that couldn't be beaten."

Everything that Mrs. Haselton said applied to New Orleans in the war, most especially to the men and women who served in the armed forces or worked for Andrew Higgins. It is no wonder that those New Orleanians over 55 years of age look back with a certain nostalgia and think of it as "the good war." That is the spirit that the Historic New Orleans Collection has captured in its exhibit.

— *Stephen E. Ambrose*

*Dr. Ambrose is Alumni Distinguished Professor and Boyd Professor of History at the University of New Orleans. He is the Director of the Eisenhower Center and consultant to the current exhibition, Over Here!: The New Orleans Home Front During World War II, on view January 15 through July 3.*

## GALLERY TALKS

*The Home Front in Louisiana and New Orleans*

**January 15:** Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose  
*The American Home Front.* 7:00 p.m.

**January 29:** Dr. Betty Field  
*Louisiana in the New Deal.* 4:00 p.m.

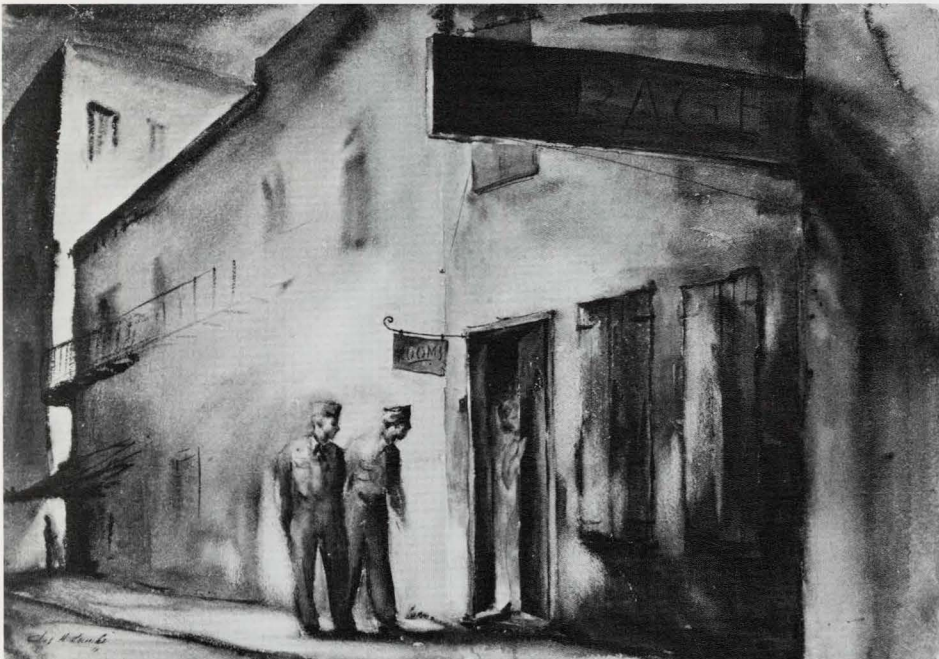
**February 12:** Dr. Jerry Purvis Sanson  
*Louisiana During World War II.*  
4:00 p.m.

**March 11:** Brian Altobello  
*An Oral History of New Orleans During World War II.* 4:00 p.m.

**March 25:** Marvin Perrett and Jerry Strahan  
*Winning the War on the Home Front by Building Landing Craft: The Genius of New Orleans's Own Andy Higgins.*  
4:00 p.m.

**April 10-11:** Eisenhower Center Annual Spring Conference at the University of New Orleans. (For registration information please contact the Eisenhower Center.)

*On April 9 the Collection is also hosting a VIP reception for the Eisenhower Center's board of directors and participants in the Center's annual spring conference. This year's theme, Home Fronts During World War II, is coordinated with THNOC's exhibition.*



Daphine Street, watercolor by Charles H. Reinike, 1943 (1980.47.13)

## REINIKE WATERCOLORS FEATURED

The painting at the left is included in the current exhibition.

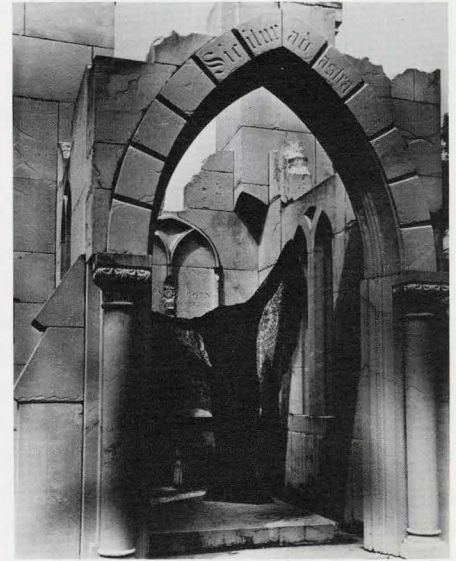
Watercolor paintings of Louisiana bayous and countryside by the late New Orleans artist Charles H. Reinike (1906-1983) are now on display in the exhibition area between the director's office and the history galleries on the second floor of the Merieult House. The paintings, executed between 1935 and 1952, are part of a memorial gift, made in 1980-81, by frequent donor Mrs. P. Roussel Norman in honor of her husband.

# MINI-EXHIBITS ON VIEW

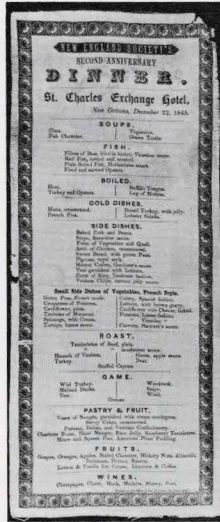
A mini-exhibit of selections from Clarence John Laughlin's "Poems of the Interior World" — evocations of the photographer's reactions to the events

of World War II — will be shown from February through July 3.

The art of fine dining, the focus of a small exhibit on view in January, complemented the culinary symposium, *The Creole Cook*, sponsored by the Hermann-Grima Historic House, January 13-16. The display included silver flatware and china owned by General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams, the Collection's founders, along with an assortment of special-event menus.



The Bat by Clarence John Laughlin (1981.247.1.757)



Menu, New England Society dinner, December 22, 1843 (1959.27.12)

## THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION QUARTERLY

Editors: Patricia Brady  
Louise C. Hoffman

Head of Photography: Jan White Brantley

The Historic New Orleans Collection Quarterly is published by the Historic New Orleans Collection, which is operated by the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation, a Louisiana nonprofit corporation. Housed in a complex of historic buildings in the French Quarter, facilities are open to the public, Tuesday through Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. Tours of the history galleries and the residences are available for a nominal fee.

Board of Directors:  
Mrs. William K. Christovich, President  
G. Henry Pierson, Jr.  
Francis C. Doyle  
John E. Walker  
Fred M. Smith

Jon Kukla, Director

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The Historic New Orleans Collection

## NEWSLETTER COMES OF AGE



### Profile: Boyd Cruise

Read Cruise's first impression of the historic Historic New Orleans Collection in a fifty-page, filled with a knowledge of events. Although their residence on Royal Street was very elegant, the Williams' mansion was kept in a museum state. Mr. Cruise saw it as a museum of historic pictures, antiques, paintings, maps, books, and lots of dust. "Mr. Cruise was the person responsible for organizing that 'current exhibitions' into one of the finest private collections of Louisiana in the state. It became the nucleus of the Historic New Orleans Collection. Mr. Cruise first as a part-time employee

of General and Mrs. L. Kemper Williams. Louisiana history collections and collectors, then as director of the newly organized Collection, guided the transformation of a private collection into a fine museum facility open to the public, with exhibitions, library, archives, and lecture gallery. Mr. Boyd Cruise had come to New Orleans in the 1930s as a young artist. He then he had built a considerable reputation as a sculptor. His work was in part done in Louisiana art and artifacts and a friend and associate of General and Mrs. Williams. Mr. Leonard Souders, Mr. Cruise's predecessor in his job at 301 Royal Street, and Mrs. Williams asked Mr.

The Historic New Orleans Collection Newsletter begins its 10th volume with the current issue; volume I, number 1 appeared in January 1983 with a profile of Boyd Cruise, the Collection's first director on the cover. The first issue discussed *Bound to Please*, an exhibition about rare books, and introduced readers to the acquisitions columns — still a feature — from the curatorial, manu-

scripts, and library divisions.

With the tenth volume launched, the editors have looked backward for a moment at the wide variety of articles about New Orleans's history and, now looking forward, have decided that *Quarterly* better describes the Collection's publication. Beginning with Volume X, continuous pagination within each volume will facilitate future indexing.

# DODE PLATOU RETIRES

With the appointment of Dr. Jon Kukla as director of the Historic New Orleans Collection, Dode Platou announced her retirement after 16 years at the Collection. Mrs. Platou has served as director since 1986, when she succeeded Stanton M. Frazar; she originally joined the staff as chief curator in 1976. On her retirement, she was named director emerita by the board of directors.

During her years at the Collection, Mrs. Platou has been actively involved with exhibitions, acquisitions, and administration. Among other achievements, she oversaw a retrospective of the paintings of the late Boyd Cruise, the Collection's first director, and the publication of an accompanying book; acquired important collections of the works of Alfred Waud and Clarence John Laughlin; and established the acquisitions committee. Also during her administration, the Collection developed computerized cataloging of its holdings.

As director emerita, Mrs. Platou plans to complete an inventory of Mr. Cruise's paintings, continue research on the work of Alfred Waud, which may lead to a future exhibition, and organize files that reflect the Collection's own history. She also plans to collect material for THNOC's artists files and to compile information concerning the many art-related boards on which she has served over the years.



*Above, Dode Platou and photographer Clarence John Laughlin at acquisition signing; THNOC is the definitive repository for Laughlin's work. Left, the Arts Council's exhibit Seldom Seen brought together John Mahé, Dode Platou, Fran Villeré, and George Jordan.*



*Left, Dode Platou coordinated the Alfred R. Waud exhibition and catalogue. Right, host committee for the American Association of Museums meeting in New Orleans.*



## DIRECTOR

It's time I brought out my "retro-specta-scope." This retrospective feeling comes, quite naturally, while I compose my last column as director of the Historic New Orleans Collection.



Looking over my shoulder at 16 years at the Collection, I recall there were fewer than 20 employees when I arrived as chief curator. The entire curatorial division was located in the large room that is now the director's office. My staff of five along with the other departments and all the collections were squeezed into the Merieult House, the Collection's main building that fronts on Royal Street.

We were constantly putting up and taking down exhibitions. It was hectic, intense, and fun. The curators cut mats, hung exhibitions, wrote and published catalogues; all departments were responsible for helping researchers and for the physical care of their collections.

More purchases and donations meant the collections grew like teenagers. Space was critical. Before long the board decided to renovate 722 Toulouse Street to accommodate the manuscripts division and to purchase another Toulouse Street building just around the corner from Royal Street to house our curatorial division.

Since the Collection's early days, we have added preparators, a publications department, photographers, a museum shop, and a systems department in charge of computerization. And we have seen the original nucleus of prints and maps acquired by the Williamses broaden and deepen to become an outstanding collection for the study of Louisiana history and culture.

All of this in just 25 years!

Looking ahead, I know that we'll see the Collection build on its strengths in the coming years. Guided by our new director, the Williamses's Historic New Orleans Collection will continue to grow and to prosper.

Godspeed!

— Dode Platou

## JON KUKLA NAMED DIRECTOR

On January 15, Dr. Jon Kukla was named director of the Historic New Orleans Collection. The announcement was made by Mary Louise Christovich, president of the board of directors. Dr. Kukla becomes the fifth director of the Collection upon the retirement of Dode Platou. He joined the staff in May 1990 as curator of collections in charge of the research divisions.

A graduate of Carthage College, Dr. Kukla earned his Ph.D. in history at the University of Toronto. Before coming to the Collection, he directed the publications program at the Virginia State Library and Archives for 14 years and was responsible for the quarterly magazine, *Virginia Cavalcade*, and for both scholarly and popular works on southern history.

His field of research centers on the southern colonies and on early American intellectual and political history. Published works by Dr. Kukla include *Political Institutions in Virginia, 1619-1660* in the Garland series of *Outstanding Studies in Early American History*; *The Bill of Rights: A Lively Heritage*; and *Speakers and Clerks of the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1643-1776*. He is currently working on *The Royal Governors of Eighteenth-Century Virginia* with John M. Hemphill II for the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and

an edition of *The Poems of Sir Francis Wyatt* from manuscripts at the British Library, London. He was a founding member of the State Review Board of the Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission and served as its chairman from 1983 to 1986.

Working cooperatively with other institutions and scholars, Dr. Kukla hopes to encourage at the Collection researchers studying New Orleans and the Gulf South in regional, national, and international contexts. He believes that the strengths and accessibility of the Collection's holdings — together with the cultural richness of the city — are increasingly attractive to serious scholarship on central themes in American history.

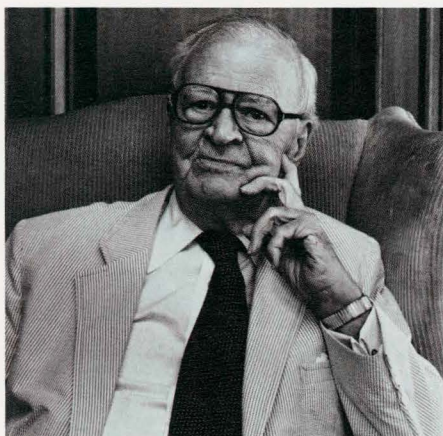
"As director," he says, "I'll be working with a dedicated board and talented staff who enjoy the good will of friends, donors, and patrons. Together, there is much we can do as the Collection embarks upon its second quarter-century. It will be fun."



Jon Kukla with Reid Mitchell, first Williams Fellow

See related story on page 10.

## IN MEMORIAM: BENJAMIN W. YANCEY



“Off with its head!” Ben Yancey would say when faced with a word usage that failed to measure up to his exacting standards. *Unique* he disliked; *interesting* he deplored; *intriguing*, *enriching*, and *rewarding* he circled with his renowned red pen and asked the author of the loathsome triumvirate to translate this gobbledygook into “ordinary, pedestrian English.”

Benjamin W. Yancey, president of the board of directors of the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation — the governing body of the Historic New Orleans Collection — died on October 28, after leading the institution for 18 years and guiding staff members past the perils of imprecise language.

Well-known in the field of maritime law, Mr. Yancey — the dean of the “admirals” — served at one time as president of the Maritime Law Association of the United States. Possessed of a keen legal mind, he was a purist when it came to the written word. He also defended his commas with a sparkling wit, insisting on the comma between the last two items in a series (*apples, peaches, and pears*) — a mark of punctuation affectionately known by the newsletter editors as Mr. Yancey’s comma.

Marriage to Janet Yancey reinforced his zeal in defending the much-abused native tongue. English teacher par excellence, former headmistress of Louise S. McGehee School, Mrs. Yancey — herself a legend — was a confirmed anglophile, as was her husband. Travels

to England and visits with cousins in Oxford kept them in touch with the land of Shakespeare. A friend remembers the dinner party given by the Yanceys, at which guests found their places according to Shakespearean quotations inscribed on each place card.

Mr. Yancey’s interests included the theater — he played a number of character roles in productions at Le Petit Théâtre back in the late ’20s and early ’30s — and reading French. Opera was a passion, and he delighted in the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan. Sure of his likes and dislikes, he maintained that he had little use for dogs and children (cats he loved) and declared that children should be born 21 years old. But *La Bohème* could bring tears to his eyes, and friends and staff members recall his compassionate side.

His wit was nowhere better expressed than in the notes he jotted in the margins of newsletter articles submitted for his scrutiny. A very fine, red ballpoint pen was the instrument used to nip at the heels of wayward rhetoric and slipshod punctuation. Sometimes a shaggy beast of an article was acknowledged with an explosive burst of

incredulity: “On second thought, I will not be permissive about *curate* as a verb. Even through there be authority for it — which I strongly disbelieve, but really do not care ... I am not singling you out to indulge my pedagogic ill humor. For almost 50 years I have waged a vicious battle to wring the legalese out of my own office’s pleadings, briefs, and correspondence. I think maybe you did this just to see whether I was awake! Well, I was!”

Sometimes, mere chiding would do: “No split infinitives please, at least not during my few remaining years to worry you.” Or, with a flair for drama and a wink at cultural literacy, he would hold forth on the matter of *co-chairs*: “*Chairman* is the correct word, but if it is a matter of principle ... I shall acquiesce. But *chairperson* will be my Thermopylae or Verdun.”

Here at the Collection, armed with your commas and wary of the weakness of certain adjectives, we, who are about to write, salute you!

— Louise C. Hoffman

*Those who wish to honor Mr. Yancey may contribute to the Benjamin W. Yancey Memorial Fund.*



*Board of directors, seated, Mary Louise Christovich, G. Henry Pierson, Jr., standing, John E. Walker, Fred M. Smith, and Francis C. Doyle*



# THNOC BOARD ELECTS OFFICERS

## MRS. WILLIAM K. CHRISTOVICH ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mrs. William K. Christovich was elected president of the board of directors of the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation on November 5, 1991. Mrs. Christovich joined the board in 1972 and has served as vice-president since 1987.

Mary Louise Christovich is a leader in the museum community and has long been in the forefront of the preservation movement in New Orleans. When Newcomb College named her the recipient of the distinguished alumna award in 1982, she was recognized for her contributions to the Friends of the Cabildo — the support group of the Louisiana State Museum — and to the Friends' books on New Orleans architecture. She is the author and editor of six volumes in the series and the author of *New Orleans Interiors* and numerous articles on preservation.

A past president and founder of the Friends of the Cabildo, Inc., Mrs. Christovich has served on the board of the Louisiana State Museum. In the spring of 1974, she served as a founding member of the Preservation Resource Center and in December of that year founded Save Our Cemeteries. She was

instrumental in the restoration efforts to save the wall vaults in St. Louis Cemetery II and directed the Historic New Orleans Collection's survey of nine historic New Orleans cemeteries. She is currently working to preserve Lafayette Cemetery I in the Garden District, an effort that was recognized by the Garden District Association in April when Mr. and Mrs. Christovich were honored with the organization's Terry-Parkerson Award.

In 1985, Mrs. Christovich received the Harnett T. Kane Award of the Louisiana Landmarks Society for significant contributions in the field of preservation in Louisiana; that same year her leadership role in preservation was recognized by the Orleáns Club. In April, she will be honored by Tulane University with its distinguished alumna award.

## JOHN E. WALKER ELECTED VICE-PRESIDENT



John E. Walker, member of the board of directors since 1989, has been elected vice-president of the board. Mr. Walker, a graduate of Tulane University, is a civil engineer and surveyor. He is president of Walker and Avery, Inc.

Mr. Walker is a past president of the Louisiana Society of Professional Surveyors and a member of numerous professional engineering and surveying societies. He was a contributing author to *New Orleans Architecture, Vol. VII: Jefferson City* and has volunteered assistance with surveys at the Louisiana Division of the New Orleans Public Library. He has served on the board of Goodwill Industries and is an active layman in the Presbyterian Church.



## FRED M. SMITH NAMED TO THE BOARD

The board of directors has elected Fred M. Smith to fill the place left vacant by the death of Benjamin W. Yancey. Mr. Smith previously served on the board from 1971 to 1983 and is currently secretary-treasurer and chief financial officer of the Kemper and Leila Williams Foundation. A graduate of Tulane University, he served as senior vice-president and trust officer of the First National Bank of Commerce before joining the Foundation in 1983.

Mr. Smith is a past president of both the Financial Analysts of New Orleans and the New Orleans Estate Planning Council and a former chairman of the Trust Division of the Louisiana Bankers Association. Involved in many civic organizations, he has served as president of the City Park board and as chairman of the board of Mercy Hospital; he has been a member of the boards of the Milne Asylum and the New Orleans Museum of Art and on the board of development of Holy Cross College. Mr. Smith is active in the Episcopal Church, serving as senior warden of St. Augustine's Church and on the executive board and standing committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana.

## RESEARCH CENTER ACQUISITIONS



The Historic New Orleans Collection encourages research in the library, manuscripts, and curatorial divisions of its research center from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Tuesday through Saturday (except holidays). Cataloged materials available to researchers include books, manuscripts, paintings, prints, drawings, maps, photographs, and artifacts about the history and culture of New Orleans, Louisiana, and the Gulf South. Each year the Collection adds thousands of items to its holdings by donation or purchase. Only a few recent acquisitions can be noted here.

### CURATORIAL

Collaborations between artists to fashion a single work combine the inspirations of two creative natures and yield a double pleasure. Such is the case with the newly acquired photographic portrait of painter Jane Sargeant by the renowned photographer Walker Evans. The photograph is a donation from Mr.



*Studio, Arts and Crafts Club, ca. 1927 (1991.116.1)*



*Jane Ninas Sargeant by Walker Evans (1991.99)*

and Mrs. Harry H. Lunn, Jr. Jane Sargeant was married to Evans when the

## FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCED

Dr. Reid Mitchell, assistant professor of history at Princeton University, is the first recipient of a Williams Senior Research Fellowship for post-doctoral study using the resources of the Historic New Orleans Collection. A graduate of the University of New Orleans, Dr. Mitchell completed his Ph.D. at the University of California, Berkeley. His dissertation was published as *Civil War Soldiers* by Viking Press of New York (1988) and chosen as an alternate selection of the History Book Club. Dr. Mitchell completed his second book while a Williams fellow at the Collection. With its title based on a Dr. John song, the manuscript of *Go See The Mardi Gras* is currently in the hands of a publisher.

Named for the Collection's founders, the Williams fellowships were instituted to encourage research in the manuscripts, library, and curatorial holdings of the research center. Eligible for support are post-doctoral projects or dissertation research in history, art history, architectural history, and related disciplines. Topics must concern New Orleans or Louisiana in regional, national, or international historical contexts. Inquiries may be directed to Dr. Jon Kukla.

The fellowships complement the General L. Kemper Williams Prizes in Louisiana History, instituted in 1974, to promote excellence in the writing of Louisiana history and to honor the authors of outstanding works.

photograph was made in the early 1950s. Sargeant, who was known as Jane Ninas at the time, lived and worked in New Orleans during the 1930s, prior to moving to New York and marrying Evans. Sargeant's paintings and Evans's photographs, dating from the period 1935-36 when they both lived in New Orleans, were the subject of a major exhibition at the Collection in 1991.

■ The name Samuel T. Blessing appears frequently in references to New Orleans photography from before the Civil War through Reconstruction. In addition to photographing landmarks of the city and furnishing portraits from life, Blessing's firm sold photographic supplies and frames and provided photographic copying services. One photographic copy of a portrait of an unidentified man has been added to the



## MANUSCRIPTS

Mary Greenleaf (1816-1902), the sister of poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, resided in New Orleans in 1852 and recorded her experiences in a diary and account book now among the Collection's manuscript holdings. She moved here with her husband James Greenleaf, a cotton broker and textile manufacturer, who was himself the cousin of poet John Greenleaf Whittier.

In brief daily entries Mary Greenleaf outlined a busy social schedule of receiving callers (including Bishop Polk and Mrs. Grima) and making social visits of her own. Always beginning her entries with a comment on the weather, this New Englander matter-of-factly recorded a snowfall of four to five inches on January 13, 1852, when, according to the weather report in the *Daily Picayune*, "Ladies who had never been out of Louisiana cried 'Mon Dieu' by dozens."

Additionally, 14 pages of ledger entries at the back of the diary provide a precise list of daily expenses and purchases for the entire year. This accounting gives clues not only into details of mid-19th century shopping lists (soap at 5 cents, shoes at 25 cents) but also provides insight into Mary Greenleaf's values and interests.

■ The manuscripts division has several items and collections that relate experiences of the Washington Artillery, organized in 1838. John M. Kinabrew, Jr., of New Orleans recently added to these holdings by donating the World War I papers of his uncle, Captain E. Earl Wood, who served in this unit.

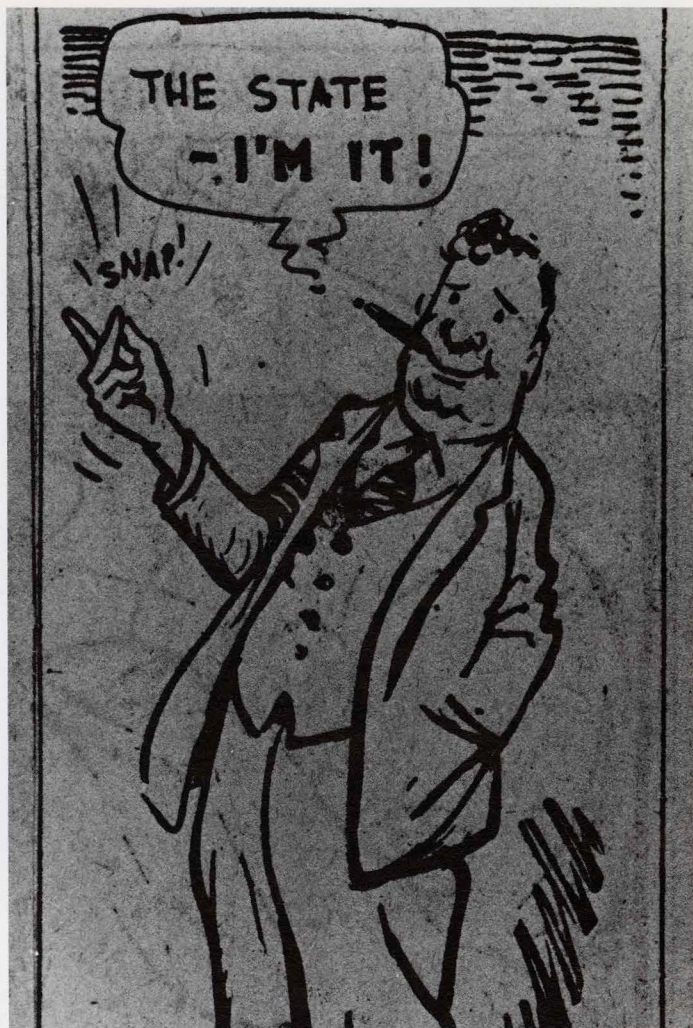
The papers consist of letters, postcards, telegrams, and newspapers recounting Wood's training experiences in various locations and on duty in France from 1916 through 1919. Writing his family in New Orleans, Wood was a keen observer of details, recalling "heavy walnut furniture and pieces of ancient Chinese porcelain" in a French chateau he visited. Other items in the collection reflect details of military life, including a Christmas dinner

menu with "pudding à La Nouvelle Orléans," a program for the 141st Field Artillery Glee Club's presentation of "A Day in Camp Quitwe'redone" (a playful title based on the unit's Camp Coetquidan in France), and several issues of the Washington Artillery's satirical camp newspaper the *Salvo*.

■ Christian R. Fatzer, Jr., of Chalmette has donated a set of 14 scrapbooks compiled by Neil A. Armstrong, Jr. (1901-1966), St. Bernard Parish attorney and school board member. Covering the period 1932 to 1941, the scrapbooks document newspaper coverage of Louisiana

politics of that era, with emphasis on St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Orleans, and Jefferson parishes under the administrations of Huey Long, O. K. Allen, Richard Leche, and Sam Jones. One scrapbook devoted to Huey Long consists of articles from national magazines as well as news clippings from the 1939 *New Orleans Item* series, "Kingdom of the Kingfish."

■ "I am damn sorry about Huey... Was Weiss hooked up to any party or was the affair purely local as the international skunkz wd. like us to think?" Continuing the theme of Louisiana politics in the 1930s, these lines from one of two recently acquired letters written by American poet, critic, and political activist Ezra Pound (1885-1972) reflect one example of distant reaction to Long's assassination.



Cartoon drawing of Huey Long, *New Orleans Item*, August 13, 1939 (91-61-L)

"I had been working on Huey... We must get O. K. Allen, or whoever is leading Huey's flock." Writing from Venice to author and social reformer Luther Whiteman in one letter and to "Crate" in the other, Pound comments on a broad range of political and literary concerns. Remarks on Huey Long, however, appear like a refrain throughout the texts: "We MUST try to get Huey's people. and teach 'em...Huey's survivors ought to rate TWO posts in the cabinet." Combining such observations with Pound's fragmented, colloquial, and desultory style ("Hoare's nephew — nice chap — in the Nat. Bank of Ethiopia, aint England juss wunnerful"), these letters remain a curious souvenir of 1930s literature, politics, and Louisiana connections.

—Joseph D. Scott

## MICROFILM

Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon has been in charge of acquiring microfilm copies of Louisiana colonial records found in Spain in the Archive of the Indies in Seville. The project was begun in 1958 and involved filming two immense series of documents relating to the Louisiana colony, the Santo Domingo Papers and the Cuban Papers. The Santo Domingo Papers have been cataloged and microfilmed for some years. Just recently, the Collection received the final installment of the microfilm edition of the Cuban Papers (*Papeles de Cuba*) concerning Louisiana. Included in this edition are *legajos* (bundles) 1109, 1137, 1145-1147, 1232, 1233, 1393, 1394, 1425, 1440-1444, 1524, 1525, 1533, 2335-2338, 2343, 2359-2362, 2367-2372. (See detailed article on microfilm at the Collection in volume VII, number 1, winter 1989. See also volume 7 and volume 8 of *Manuscripts Division Update*.)



*Florence Jumonville, Suzanne Freeman, and Jon Kukla*

## LIBRARY CONSULTATION

Researchers know that the library at the Collection maintains exemplary rare book holdings and extensive supporting material, especially of titles published since the 1960s. Well-managed collections are never static, however, and benefit from periodic scrutiny by visiting accreditation teams. In October 1991 Dr. Suzanne Hill Freeman, a collection development specialist at Virginia Commonwealth University, worked with librarians and senior staff to identify strengths and remedy weaknesses in library holdings, acquisitions procedures and policies, and reference services. After study at Mary Baldwin and Middlebury colleges, Dr. Freeman took her Ph.D. in Spanish literature at the University of Virginia and M.L.S. from Simmons College.

## TAX ADVANTAGE

Congress recently passed legislation extending for six months the 12 tax provisions that were to expire at the end of 1991. One of the provisions allows individuals subject to the Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) to claim the full market-value deduction for gifts of appreciated tangible personal property, such as manuscripts and works of art, donated to museums and other appropriate not-for-profit institutions.

## ERRATUM

The fall issue of the *Newsletter* incorrectly identified a photograph that recorded the transfer of the Girod Street Cemetery property. The photograph was included in the donation of cemetery records by Christ Church Cathedral. The identification should read, seated, General L. Kemper Williams and Norton Wisdom; standing, Edmund McIlhenny and Hepburn Many.

## AT THE COLLECTION...



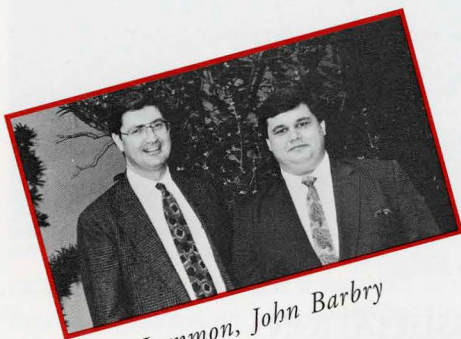
*John E. Walker, Jackie Clarkson, Supt. William McCrossen, firefighter Bob Whitman, Assistant Supt. Warren McDaniels, Dode Platou, and Jude Solomon at the opening of Ready at First Sound: The New Orleans Fire Department*



## STAFF

### Professional Activities

Jan White Brantley, head of photography, was featured in the Sunday, January 5, edition of the *Times-Picayune* in "New Orleans Area Women to Watch in 1992"...she was recognized for her wide-ranging photographic activities.

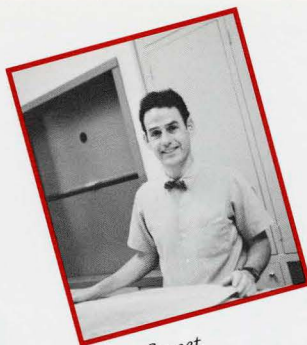


Alfred Lemmon, John Barbry

Dr. Alfred E. Lemmon, curator of manuscripts, served as co-chairman of the annual meeting in November of the Society of Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts...he and Dr. Wilbur E. Meneray of Tulane University will serve as co-chairmen of the host committee for the 1993 meeting of the Society of American Archivists to be held in New Orleans.

Dr. Jon Kukla, director, served as chairman and commentator of the session "Berkeley and Leisler: A New Look," at the Southern Historical Association annual meeting in Fort Worth...and he was appointed to the association's membership committee for 1992.

John H. Lawrence, senior curator, gave a lecture on collecting photographs at the Fine Arts Museum of the South in Mobile, Alabama...he also gave a slide presentation of personal photographic work to a drawing class at Tulane University. Dr. Patricia Brady, director of publications, has been elected vice-president of the New Orleans/Gulf South Booksellers Association.



Steve Sweet

Works by Steve Sweet, assistant preparator, are on exhibit in a show at the Arthur Roger Gallery that opened February 1... he is the producer of "Domeheads," a satirical video vignette shown on Diamondvision screens at the home games of the New Orleans Saints.

Elsa Schneider, curator of education, attended the New Orleans Fire Department Centennial Awards Banquet and accepted an award for the Collection's participation in celebration of the Fire Department's 100th anniversary.

Jan White Brantley was a recent guest of the Galveston Historical Foundation for a day sail on the *Elissa* in appreciation for her contribution of prints from glass-plate negatives to the Texas Seaport Museum, recently opened in Galveston. Judy Tarantino, photographer, reproduced 75 glass positives, owned by the Middle America Research Institute at Tulane University, for the Grand Gulch Research Center in Boulder, Colorado.



Leslie Johnston

Leslie Johnston, systems, served as coordinator for the annual Museum Computer Network conference in Santa

Monica, California, in November...she is editor of the visual information column in *Spectra*, the journal of the Museum Computer Network.

### Publications

Woodlawn Plantation in Virginia was the site of a tea in honor of the publication of Patricia Brady's *George Washington's Beautiful Nelly*; she also autographed the book at Mount Vernon...Dr. Brady signed books at an autograph party at Maple Street's Garden District Book Shop in December.

Jon Kukla contributed a review essay to the autumn 1991 issue of the *Southern Literary Journal*.

Jan White Brantley's photographs of musical instruments and jazz memorabilia will be reproduced in the Japanese edition of *Playboy's History of Jazz & Rock, Part II*, the fifth foreign edition of the article that originally appeared in the January 1991 issue of *Playboy*.

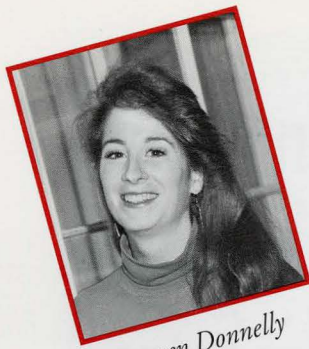
John H. Lawrence reviewed two books for *Louisiana History* and contributed an article to the *New Orleans Art Review*. Judith H. Bonner, associate curator, also contributed two articles to the *Review*.

### Media

Judith H. Bonner serves as judge and question writer for "Varsity Star Quiz Bowl" on WYES-TV...she was also judge and question writer for the preliminary qualifying rounds of "Varsity Quiz Bowl," co-sponsored by the New Orleans Public Schools, WYES-TV, and Cox Cable. Patricia Brady was interviewed on WDSU-TV and WBYU-Radio about her recently published book.

### Changes

Leslie Johnston (B.A., M.A., UCLA) has joined the staff as documentation coordinator...she comes from the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities in Santa Monica, California.



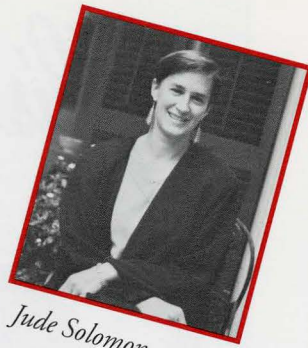
Maureen Donnelly

Several title changes have been announced: **Alfred E. Lemmon**, curator of manuscripts; **John D. Barbry**, manuscripts research supervisor; **Maureen Donnelly**, senior registrar; **Jude Solomon**, assistant curator.

### Meetings

Staff members attending the Southeastern Museums Conference in Jackson, Mississippi, in October were **Judith Bonner**, **Maclyn Hickey**, **Priscilla Lawrence**, and **Stan Ritchey**. **Judy Tarantino** served as photographer for the conference.

**John Lawrence** attended the meetings of the Daguerrean Society and the History of Photography Group in Santa Fe, New Mexico. **Dr. Joseph Scott**, **John D. Barbry**, and **Alfred E. Lemmon**



Jude Solomon

attended the meeting of the Society of Louisiana Archives and Manuscripts. **Leslie Johnston** attended a computer training session at Willoughby Associates in Chicago.



Judith Bonner, Judy Tarantino, Stan Ritchey, Maclyn Hickey, Priscilla Lawrence

### Speakers Bureau

Staff members have recently made presentations to the following organizations: **Jon Kukla**, Louisiana Society of Mayflower Descendants and Louisiana Landmarks Society...**Patricia Brady**, Louisiana Landmarks Society...**John Magill**, Organization of Refrigeration Warehouse Owners, University of New Orleans Women's Club, Delta Chapter of the Louisiana Archeological Society, and research volunteers of the Preservation Resource Center...**Pamela D. Arceneaux**, Singles on Sundays Group of Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church...**Alfred Lemmon**, Greater New Orleans Tourist Guide Association.

#### PHOTO CREDITS

Jan White Brantley  
Cornelius Regan  
Judy Tarantino

### THE SHOP

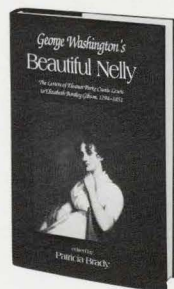


The shop is offering for sale a large assortment of memorabilia related to Mardi Gras krewes — from A to Z — including ball favors, carnival bulletins, invitations, dance cards, doubloons, and miniature floats. Selected items are from the following krewes: Athenians, Atlanteans, Babylon, Bacchus, Bards of Bohemia, Carrollton, Cleopatra, Comus, Dorians, Elves of Oberon, Endymion, Eros, Falstaffians, Hermes, Iris, Mid-City, Mithras, Momus, Mystic, Nereus, Noblads, Olympians, Osiris, Pegasus, Prometheus, Prophets of Persia, Proteus, Rex, Thoth, Twelfth Night Revelers, Venus, Yami, Zeus, and Zulu.

### George Washington's Beautiful Nelly

From the nation's capital or from Louisiana's plantation country, Nelly Custis Lewis wrote of everything from politics to puddings. "Nelly Custis Lewis's letters to a friend tell the tale of the 'crown princess' of the new republic."  
—W.W. Abbot, editor of the *Papers of George Washington*

Please send: \_\_\_\_\_ copies of *George Washington's Beautiful Nelly: Letters of Eleanor Parke Custis Lewis to Elizabeth Bordley Gibson, 1794-1851*, edited by Patricia Brady (287 pp.) @ \$24.95



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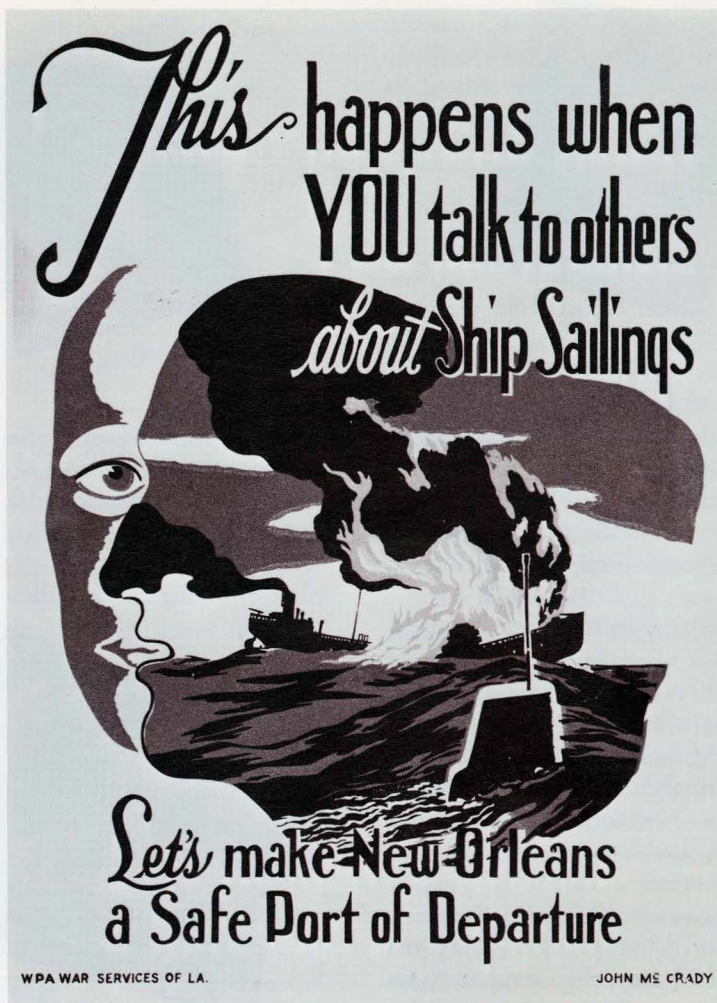
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## WORLD WAR II MATERIAL SOUGHT

Is history crumbling in your attic? From January 15 through July 3 the Collection welcomes visitors to *Over Here!: The New Orleans Home Front in World War II* — an exhibition presented in cooperation with the Eisenhower Center of the University of New Orleans. Many photographs and artifacts now on display spent decades in attics, garages, or warehouses, at risk of being mistaken for junk and destroyed by fire, vermin, weather, or accident. As you commemorate the 50th anniversary of World War II, please give some thought to donating your family's accumulated letters, photographs, recollections, or memorabilia — the raw material of our history — to an appropriate library or archive.

*WPA War Services poster (1988.99.2)*



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